

**BUDGET SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
May 9, 2002
6:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JOSEPH M. BUTLER PRESIDING

PRESENT: COUNCILWOMAN ROXANNE M. BURNS
 COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH
 COUNCILMAN PAUL A. SIMMONS
 COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH
 MAYOR BUTLER

ALSO PRESENT: CITY MANAGER JERRY C. HILLER
 ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER MARY M. CORRIVEAU
 CITY COMPTROLLER JAMES M. McCAULEY
 I.T. MANAGER PETER KEENAN
 DPW SUPERINTENDENT EUGENE HAYES
 WATER SUPERINTENDENT GARY PILON
 DEPUTY COMPTROLLER BONNIE ROBBE
 CHIEF WTP OPERATOR BRIAN GAFFNEY
 CITY ENGINEER NORMAN LIU
 CIVIL ENGINEER I JOSEPH O'BRIEN

Mayor Butler opened the budget session.

Water Fund

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Councilman Simmons asked why water rents were down.

Mr. Pilon explained that the projections are based on the fact that water consumption is going down, perhaps due to water conservation awareness.

Councilman Clough asked why there was only a \$40,000 increase in the outside user fees.

Mr. Pilon explained that this is based on the numbers in the reports from the town engineers.

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Councilman Clough asked about this account.

Mr. Pilon explained that this account tracks all the water used now. However, the reason it is down may be that people didn't want to bother having to go through the paperwork

to get set up on an account with the City and to place a deposit with the City for the service. Mr. Pilon also advised that the hours of operation for this service are now limited as a result of 9/11.

Mr. McCauley advised that at the end of March the revenues in this account were \$13,287.

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Mrs. Corriveau advised Council that the \$25,153 on the Water Meter Reader line must be moved over and added to the 2002-03 column on the page.

Councilman Smith asked why the retirement amount was higher this year.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that the rates had gone up dramatically from last year. The estimated rate is the only one that can be used until the final rate is known in November.

Mr. Pilon discussed the software and training expenses in the budget.

Councilman Clough questioned why the I.T. Manager couldn't train everyone on software for each department.

Mr. Keenan, I.T. Manager, explained that the software expertise lies with KVS, not with him.

Mr. Pilon explained how the meters are read at this time and how the meter readers still have to write down the readings and then the clerical personnel in the office transfer the figures.

Councilman Smith questioned if less personnel would be needed as a result of this software being implemented.

Mr. Pilon explained that to do a total change over would take at least 1-½ years.

Mayor Butler explained to Council that once this is all in place, down the road, it would mean one meter reader.

Councilman Clough suggested sending only one person to train on all the software and then that person can come back and train the others, like the fire department does with their training.

Mayor Butler stated that he doesn't feel that it is very good idea. He stated that everyone should receive the training. He also explained that the people that come back to train fellow fire personnel have been certified in the course before ever being allowed to train others.

Mr. Pilon explained that the bulk of the money is to have the software people come here to train our people on site. Some of the money is for the meter reading software and not KVS.

Mayor Butler stated that while he understood the importance of membership to AWWA, he asked Mr. Pilon to explain the need for this to Council.

Mr. Pilon advised Council that this membership, which is the City's, allows them to receive daily faxes, announcements and security warnings. It also allows for a discount for workshops and training.

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Councilman Smith asked about the chemical feed pumps.

Mr. Gaffney stated that there are eight pumps. None had been replaced in about 10 years until last year when two were replaced. There are two in this year's budget.

Councilman Clough asked why there was such a large increase in the budget.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that this is due to the electric charges.

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Council asked about equipment charges. It was explained that a lot of the equipment is worn out.

Mr. Pilon explained that the operator trainee position was only ½ year last year. This year, it is a full year position.

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Mr. Pilon explained that there had been a re-organization in this area. The maintenance mechanics were reduced from 7 to 5 and two working crew chief positions were added. He also advised that there had been a supervisor at grade 18 last year and they decided that it was a good chance to restructure the department.

Mr. Pilon advised that the radios that were being replaced were 10 to 15 years old and it was very difficult to get parts for them. He also explained that the department has four cell phones, which are used when the phone lines are out and the radio system goes down. He explained that the department has become more sensitive since 9/11.

Council asked if Mr. Pilon had the experience and qualifications to be the Transmission and Distribution Supervisor.

He responded that he would have to learn a lot about it.

Mayor Butler commented that he is not recommending deleting the position.

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Councilman Simmons asked if there was anything that could be taken out of this budget. He questioned the need for the fencing.

Mr. Pilon explained that the fence is on the back side where there is currently no fencing. The security at the facility is compromised without it.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that this is in the area where the City wants to promote the river and therefore, more people would be going near the facility.

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Council was advised that the F1990 Contingent Fund would be modified accordingly.

Mini-Hydro Plants

Mr. Hiller advised Council that staff is looking into mini-hydro plants, which could be used to offset the hydro costs for the water department. The feasibility study will cost **\$15,000**. Mr. Hiller explained that by this summer, the City should have a strong indication if this idea is still feasible. Mr. Hiller also commented that funding for the project could probably come from grants and low interest loans.

Mr. Liu commented that development of this type fits in well with the Federal Energy Department's recommendations.

Mr. O'Brien remarked that a good part of the civil structure is already in place. They will work with the kayakers to make sure that they are not affected by the plan.

Council concurred that it would be a good idea to pursue this project and concurred with spending the money for the study.

Page – 155

Mr. McCauley advised Council that the debt service budget was being reduced by **\$8,093**. He explained that this fund balance is based on assumption that the expenses will come in as estimated. However, some of the projects have not even gone to bid yet. Therefore, the amount can be reduced accordingly.

Page – 228

Council discussed the Bellew Avenue improvements. Mr. Pilon explained that the water main currently is located where the combined storm and sanitary sewer has to go.

Councilman Simmons asked if the replacement walks could be charged back.

Mr. Pilon stated that they couldn't because the project is using federal and state aid.

Page – 229

Council was advised that the total CDBG funds are \$750,000. About ½ - \$339,000- will be used for the NESNID project at Emerson Place. The funds cannot be used for

acquisition, but can be used for demolition. The remaining funds will be used for rehabilitation programs in the NESNID area for owner occupied rehab. It was explained that site improvements for the demolished areas would include seeding, planting of trees, neighborhood playground and parking. All property that the City purchases will be City of Watertown property bought for a public purpose.

Page – 233

Council was advised that this cost is an estimate from Engineering, based on the sq. ft. of the building, which is three or four stories high. The repairs are located on the river side of the building.

Page – 236

Councilman Clough asked if it would make more sense to do St. Mary Street at the same time as Lillian Street.

Mr. Pilon explained that Lillian Street had been projected as an in-house project assuming that the same number of employees were still working. He explained that there isn't a water main on St. Mary Street to connect to at this point. He also explained that the plans are back, and the project is ready to bid.

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Mr. Pilon explained that this truck is small for their needs. Once replaced, it would be used by Mr. Hayes at Thompson Park.

Page – 211&212

Mr. Keenan explained that the request on page 212 is the first of a two-year request. Next year's amount is \$170,000. The project would provide for integration of voice and data over the same network infrastructure.

Council was also advised that the software upgrades for DPW, while not necessarily reducing the number of personnel, would make the jobs more efficient.

Mr. Keenan also explained that the new software and computers would allow for the ability to reach out and manage the work from a central location.

Bus Operations

Mayor Butler referred to Mr. Hiller's memo and the correspondence from NYS DOT. Mayor Butler explained that all five buses would be used – three being used at any one time and two staying in the garage. They would be used so that each would have about the same average mileage. He listed the costs that would be incurred if the City didn't follow through with the original plan and also advised Council of the state aid and bus fare amounts. Mayor Butler explained that NYS DOT has advised the City that they could go ahead with the purchase of the five buses and use them in rotation for proper maintenance without increasing the number of and length of the routes currently being traveled. The purchase and use of the new buses in this way would not adversely affect the transit bus/DPW storage and maintenance facility now under design. However, DOT

would consider this as a temporary situation and would expect the City to use the new buses as originally planned in a reasonable length of time.

Mr. Hiller remarked that DOT expects four routes for the next fiscal year.

Council was advised that because the buses have lifts, it would take longer to do a route. Therefore, the routes will have to be reconfigured.

Mr. Hiller remarked that a reasonable length of time would be for the next fiscal year.

Mrs. Corriveau outlined the savings for Council and will complete the projections for fuel savings and overtime savings. The estimated savings at this point is approximately, **\$40,000.**

Council concurred to implement the plan.

Page – 200&202

Councilman Simmons asked if discussions were still going on with the County.

Mr. Hiller explained that they had provided the County with the information to assist them with a decision and the City hasn't heard back from them. He explained that the City is in the "11th hour" and the County is in the starting phase.

Councilman Clough asked why last year this was in at \$1,000,000 and this year it is in for \$500,000.

Mr. Hayes explained that the costs are now split between DPW and Transit. He explained that the bus garage is located on the river side, just inside the flood zone. There is considerable green space between the building and the river.

Councilman Simmons referred to page 200 asking about the front-end loader.

Mr. Hayes explained that the loader is used all the time, year around.

Council discussed the need for four front-end loaders and if the one at the airport could be used for other DPW projects.

Mr. Hayes stated that while it probably could, when there is a spot inspection by FAA, they want to see the equipment at the airport.

Councilman Clough remarked that if the City doesn't get the grant, we don't have to purchase the vehicle. He also commented that all of these things are going to be looked at down the road with the implementation of the committee, which he and Councilwoman Burns serve on.

Mrs. Corriveau advised Council that some of these things have already been committed to.

Councilman Simmons continued to question Mr. Hayes about the need for the number of front-end loaders that the City has.

Mr. Hayes explained how these are vehicles which are used on many projects throughout the City and are used throughout the year. He also explained that the requests are only for maintaining the fleet.

Council was also advised that if Stream does come in, one of the agreements is that the snow has to be removed from the parking lots. It is a key factor in the agreement.

Page – 204

Councilman Simmons stated that he questions this request.

Mr. Hiller explained that this request is from the 5th Judicial Judge with the understanding that they agreed to use the courtroom at the PSB. There was a consensus of three Council members who supported the request. Councilmen Simmons and Smith didn't support it.

Page – 207

Councilman Clough questioned the overnight parking in the lots around the City. He was advised that there is no restriction on overnight parking in municipal lots.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that if Council wants to review parking in the lots, they could do so at any time.

Councilwoman Burns stated that the project needed to be done because Council has encouraged property maintenance throughout the City. This is City owned property that needs to have the proposed repairs made to it.

There was a consensus of three members to do the reconstruction of the City Hall Parking lot. Councilmen Simmons and Smith didn't support it.

Budget Adjustments

Mayor Butler asked that the contingency fund on page 26 be reduced by \$272,000 instead of the previously proposed amount.

Councilman Simmons recommended reducing the Management raises to 1%, thus cutting \$44,000 from the budget.

Mayor Butler reminded Councilman Simmons that Management had already given back \$16,000 in the wellness program, had agreed to pre-certification and are paying \$177.00 more in health insurance because they are not capped. In addition, they also have no longevity or steps.

Mayor Butler polled the Council on this proposal. It passed with Councilwoman Burns, Councilman Simmons and Councilman Smith voting in favor of the cut in management raises. Mayor Butler voted against and Councilman Clough had already voted against the initial proposal involving the contingency account in a prior budget session.

Cell Phones

Referring to Mr. Hiller's memo, Councilman Simmons remarked that he has concerns with taking away the Police Department's and Mr. Hiller's phones. Mr. Hiller explained that Chief Piche would be at Monday's meeting and could address these concerns.

Councilman Clough questioned the number that the Police need in the cars, since 15 cars are never out on the road at any one time.

Council concurred to terminate the cell phones for all departments except the Police and City Manager, for a savings of **\$6039.80**.

General Fund Debt

Council concurred to reduce the general fund debt by **\$67,159** based on Mr. McCauley's memo.

Training/Travel Accounts

Mr. Hiller advised that these figures would be available for Council for Monday's meeting.

Yard Waste/Brush Figures

These figures will also be made available to Council via e-mail from Mr. Hiller.

Mayor Butler remarked that the alternatives would be 1) get out of the yard waste business and then make a transfer site available where people can take the waste which would result in a \$165,000 savings; or 2) establish a \$40 fee per residence (4,000) which would result in \$160,000 revenue. Mayor Butler stated that he is not advocating a fee or making residents go to the transfer site in Pamela. He asked that Council think about this over the weekend.

Mr. Hayes explained that the first alternative would result in a net savings of \$132,000 after personnel reduction and vehicle acquisition costs have been figured in.

CSEA Proposals

Councilman Clough asked that staff review the proposals submitted by the CSEA.

Mr. Hiller advised Council that all department heads had received a copy of the proposals.

Review Cuts to Budget

Mayor Butler outlined the cuts made this evening and in previous sessions.

Budget session adjourned at 9:10p.m.

Note: The next budget session will be held on Monday, May 13th at 6:00 p.m. The adjourned Council meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m.

Donna M. Dutton, City Clerk